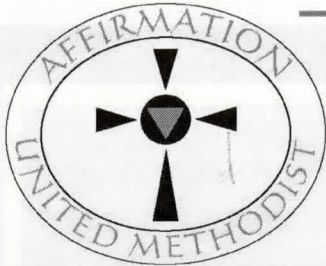


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# Affirmation

AN INDEPENDENT VOICE FOR:  
UNITED METHODISTS FOR LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER, AND QUEER CONCERNS  
PO BOX 1021, EVANSTON, IL 60204-1021 \* UMAFFIRMATION@YAHOO.COM \* WWW.UMAFFIRM.ORG

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## Affirmation Co-spokesperson's Statement on Two Judicial Council Decisions

By The Rev. Peggy R. Gaylord Co-Spokeperson for National Affirmation: United Methodists for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Concerns, Inc.

My immediate response is that I am shocked and greatly dismayed at the Judicial Council's decision to reverse last May's [Northeast Jurisdiction Committee on Appeals] ruling reinstating Irene Elizabeth "Beth" Stroud's clergy credentials. Alan Symonette's oral argument [her attorney] was wonderfully clear, powerful, and covered the depth of the implications of the issue. The

church's counsel, Tom Hall, was also very clear, which I thought was to our advantage, so that people could see the real discrepancy. I was lulled into the hope that the Judicial Council would understand the essential issues of discrimination and oppression, and God's higher authority above the institution of church, especially its law. No one

(Continued on page 5)

## Remembering Phyllis Athey, A Victim and A Pioneer Reflection on Affirmation's 30th Anniversary Year

By Peggy R. Gaylord, Affirmation Co-Spokeperson

In early 1987, I met Phyllis Athey and her then-partner Mary Jo Osterman, at the first Reconciling Congregation Convocation in Chicago. I still see them in my mind, especially Phyllis in her passion around LGBTQ issues, and in particular, women's issues. There was a documentary made of that first convocation, *Casting Out Fear*. There is a piece of footage showing Phyllis suddenly expressing a gesture of power, like "power to the people," to all of us for facing this struggle/challenge. Later in the video, is an interview of another

woman who had been ordained an elder. When her church discovered that she was a lesbian, her orders were ultimately taken away from her. She had trouble attending church afterwards because she didn't feel like laity--she had experienced and received her ordination as from God, but the church said she no longer was clergy. She finished by explaining that when you're ordained by God, "the call never goes away, it just never goes away."

(Continued on page 8)

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BY: .....



## HONORING PROPHETS

Rev. Laurie Hays Coffman  
Calvary UMC, Durham, NC

*Even as Rosa Parks lies in state at the US Capitol, Beth Stroud is removed from her place.*

She sat down when the bus driver said move back.

And when the whites said shut up, she spoke out.

And when they said sit down, she stood up.

And when they said you're fired, she found her life's work.

Today the mother of the civil rights movement lies in honor.

Our hero and model and quiet saint lives on in us.

She listened when her maker called her by name.

And when God said who will go for me, she said here I am.

And when Jesus said feed my sheep, she said I will.

And when the Spirit said the truth will make you free, she said

Be it unto me according to thy word.

And when the church said be quiet, she spoke up.

And when the conference said stay in, she came out.

And when the court said you're fired, she found her life's work.

Today this sister walks in dignity and faithfulness.

Our hero and model and quiet saint lives still for Christ.

*I believe we shall see  
the goodness of the Lord  
in the land of the living!*

And though this world, with devils filled, should threaten to undo us,

we will not fear, for God hath willed his truth to triumph through us.

The Prince of Darkness grim, we tremble not for him;

his rage we can endure, for lo, his doom is sure;

one little word shall fell him.

*(A Mighty Fortress Is Our God, Martin Luther, 1529)*

O God, please speak the word through us.

Bless Beth and Chris and all who ache with them this day.

Lead us on toward the light.

## Affirmation Newsletter

This Affirmation newsletter is a quarterly publication.

Only Affirmation's elected spokespersons may represent the official positions of this organization. Opinions here, signed or unsigned, are those of the writers, and do not necessarily represent the opinions of Affirmation.

Articles for consideration for publication may be submitted to:

[AffirmationNewsletter@yahoo.com](mailto:AffirmationNewsletter@yahoo.com).

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Co-Editors:

Jan DeLap & Diane DeLap

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Methodists for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual,  
Transgender and Queer Concerns;  
PO Box 1021

Evanston, IL 60204.

[www.umaffirm.org](http://www.umaffirm.org)

E-mail: [umaffirmation@yahoo.com](mailto:umaffirmation@yahoo.com)

## Mission Statement

As an independent voice of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer people, Affirmation radically reclaims the compassionate and transforming gospel of Jesus Christ by relentlessly pursuing full inclusion in the Church as we journey with the Spirit in creating God's beloved community.

Adopted January 2005





## **Affirmation National Council**

John R. Calhoun  
Oklahoma City, OK  
[REDACTED]

Diane DeLap  
Wilmington, MA  
[REDACTED]

Rev. Peggy R. Gaylord,  
Co-Spokesperson  
Binghamton, NY  
[REDACTED]

Rev. Nancy Giese  
Columbus, OH  
[REDACTED]

Rev. David Meredith  
Columbus, OH  
[REDACTED]

Kathryn Mitchem,  
Co-Convener  
Tennessee

Jim Palmquist  
Co-Convener  
Macungie, PA  
[REDACTED]

Rev. Kenneth I. Rowe,  
Co-Spokesperson  
San Francisco, CA  
[REDACTED]

Rev. Vivian Ruth Waltz  
Hamburg, NY  
[REDACTED]

A gay man  
Los Angeles, CA

## **She Graduated!!!**

By Diane DeLap

The e-mail was one of dozens in my inbox that night, but the subject line caught my eye instantly. It contained the name of a pastor I knew from our Annual Conference with the addition "... Graduates To Eternal Reward." As I opened the e-mail, I thought of this friend and what she meant to me in the short time that we had known each other. There was so much I didn't know about her, but so much that I shared with her.

In early 2003 I attended a meeting of the retired clergy group of our Conference and met her there. We were both there to share our experiences with living Transgender lives. I had heard her name mentioned as a pastor from the Conference who had transitioned from living as male to female a number of years before. As I listened to her story, a deep respect for her grew. When we talked following the meeting, we discovered a number of other things that we had in common. I had spent the years following my marriage in my wife's home town in Ohio. It happened that my new friend grew up in that area and graduated from the college in that town. We shared together our memories of that area and the difficulties of gender transition.

Following that meeting, I became part of her e-mail "To" list for her various thoughts, and causes. We didn't see each other often, mostly at Annual Conference, where she was always active in COSROW presentations. We met there and shared a hug and caught up on the events of the past year. She was active in UNICEF, in Native American causes, she had spent the last summer in Nicaragua working on religious murals, and she was active in children's camping. All of these began after her retirement from an active career as a pastor.

But of all the things she did, it was her indomitable spirit and enthusiasm that I'll remember. I know the difficulties of living a transgender life. It's a conflicted life that drives many to end their lives, but instead she lived hers as the vibrant woman she was. Most people either didn't know or didn't care that she was transsexual. She was loved for who she was. She didn't feel that it was necessary for her to go around complaining about the hand she was dealt. She moved on and dedicated herself to helping those less fortunate. The complaint has been raised that those of us in the LGBTQ community are stuck on one issue – equality. My friend silently went about disproving that lie. She had so many issues – so many causes – that she supported with her time and talents – and

(Continued on page 10)



## Constituency Responds to Judicial Council Decisions

Affirmation has received many responses, which we intend to place in a single source file on our website as we receive permission to publish them publicly. Here are two responses, reprinted with permission.

From the United Kingdom:

From: Peter Forsaith

Date: Wed, 09 Nov 2005

Subject: UMC judicial decision

I am very disturbed by the recent decisions of the UMC Judicial Council.

As a Methodist historian this seems to be in clear contrast to the over-riding Wesley/Methodist ethos of Christianity being 'for all' ['For all, for all my Savior died/For all my Lord was crucified.']

When I take visiting groups around the Wesley sites here in Oxford, I remind them that in 1732 the Wesleys took up the case of a man imprisoned for sodomy. It got them into disrepute, but they viewed it as important advocacy.

All best wishes with your ongoing work!

Peter Forsaith

Coordinator, Methodist Studies Unit

The Wesley Centre, Oxford

Westminster Institute of Education

Oxford Brookes University

Note: The previous comments represent the personal views of the author, and do not represent the views of Oxford Brookes University or of any other body.

After I got over my depression of both the Supreme Court and the Judicial Council on the same day [10/31/05], I began to think that maybe this is the card that brings the house of cards DOWN! (straw that broke the camel's back, if you prefer). I cannot imagine that "moderates" and even some conservatives will ALLOW our church to "refuse membership" to anyone.

Perhaps we should end the "open doors..." campaign by closing it, and distribute the money to all the annual conferences! Previously we knew that some congregations did NOT have "open doors," but we trusted, in hope, that it was what the Church really wanted. Now, however, it's become an "OFFICIAL" position, and publicly FALSE that we, as a Church welcome everyone.

I predicted before the decision, when I heard it was going to the Judicial Council, that this would happen, particularly when I read again Paragraph 217. The very first (of seven) vows for membership is "to renounce the spiritual forces of wickedness, reject the evil powers of the world, and repent of their sin." (5 and 7 also require a vow that could be difficult.) And since we know that weddings and baptisms already are refused by pastors with regard to gay people, why should we think that membership would be any different?

So I look to this unbelievable decision as "fuel for the fire" that will result in a 2008 Gen. Conference with either enormous Disciplinary changes or a clear church split. I would hope we could look to the bishops to take the lead in bringing us back to our "open doors" slogan.

Jeanne Audrey Powers



*Affirmation Statement on Judicial Council Decisions (Continued from page 1)*

seems to remember Jesus and the Pharisees in these legal cases.

I am absolutely astounded that the Judicial Council also reversed Bishop [Charlene P.] Kammerer's decision concerning the involuntary leave of absence of The Rev. Edward Johnson who was suspended because he had refused church membership to a gay man. That case has even larger implications for our constituency, and for the church as a whole around the issue of inclusion, and the gifts and graces that diversity brings to all of us. Up until this point, gay-identified people have generally been admitted to church membership despite contradictions in our United Methodist Book of Discipline ['homosexuals are of sacred worth,' printed alongside, 'the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching'].

I acknowledge that both decisions ultimately rest on technicalities of church law and must be read in that light. However, it hadn't occurred to me that the underlying issue could be whether we are all God's children. I thought we all shared at least that fundamental belief.

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Editor's Note: The Rev. Peggy R. Gaylord and the Rev. Vivian Ruth Waltz were both present for the trial, jurisdictional appeal, and Judicial Council hearing for Beth Stroud, as Affirmation's official representatives.

## **Affirmation Prayer Web**

By Vivian Waltz

The Membership Committee of the Affirmation Council has initiated an online prayer web. This ministry was borne of our committee's vision of being "called to share the mission of Affirmation with members and nonmembers in ways that encourage participation through ongoing prayers, faithful presence, personal and financial gifts, and dedicated service."

We plan to periodically send out a prayer request or requests that have been discerned by the Affirmation Council at our semiannual Council meetings, and via our online connection between meetings. We hope to expand the prayer web to include personal prayer concerns of our members, but for now we are in a trial period of implementing this new and vital ministry.

An e-mail group called "Affirmation Prayer Web" (pending a better suggestion) has been set up which includes people who checked "I will pray for Affirmation" on their membership card. If you would like to be included in this online ministry, please send an e-mail to [REDACTED] with "Affirmation Prayer Web" in the subject line. Include your name and e-mail address. The group list will be confidential--no names or e-mail addresses will be displayed on the posts.

On behalf of all those with whom Affirmation is in ministry, the Membership Committee is grateful for our members whose commitment to our mission goes beyond financial support.

Current prayer requests:

1) Please pray that Affirmation will be blessed with an abundance of resources (prayers, presence, gifts, and service) to maintain the strength of ministry among our lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender,

(Continued on page 7)



## Affirmation Meets in Phoenix

By Nancy Giese

It is Columbus Day weekend and this Columbus, OH native is headed for Phoenix, AZ for the Affirmation Council Meeting. After being warmly greeted and settling in, I meet with the Council in the Clarendon Hotel + Suites boardroom that is to be our meeting room for the weekend. Our agenda this weekend includes a corporate meeting to make some changes in our by-laws so that we are better able to work for greater diversity among Council members. We spend Friday evening setting agenda and catching up while others arrive from various locales across the United States.

Saturday morning begins with a 3-hour seminar on the consensus model of decision-making. Affirmation believes in the consensus model, and operates from this basis in all our work and decision-making. After lunch we begin our first series of committee meetings where we focus on various aspects of ministry. While some are working on new budgets, others work toward better relations with other UM groups and connections to other LGBTQ groups. Still others focus on finalizing the plans for a spiritual retreat on what it means to embody a Queer theology in the lives of LGBTQ United Methodists and allies. The evening rounds out in bringing committee work back to the Council for overall consensus on plans.

Sunday begins by attending Asbury UMC, a Reconciling Church in the Phoenix area. Be sure to check this church out if you are ever in the area over a weekend. It was a fantastic place to worship, and we made many new friends and even found some old ones. Our corporate meeting and another round of committee meetings ends with a Council consensus late Sunday evening.

Monday morning seems hectic as it is time to gather our things in preparation for checking out of the hotel, and gathering for a last council time to finalize our work and plan for newsletter articles in the months to come. We approve three people to go to the Judicial Council Meeting in Houston at the end of the month, as we are the LGBTQ voice present for support and advocacy.

A time of worship and group photo closes our official face-to-face time together for 2005. We say our goodbyes with hugs knowing we will be busy working together and apart in between meetings to be a voice of LGBTQ United Methodists working for full inclusion of all people at all levels of the church.

Note: The National Council of Affirmation extends a heartfelt "thank you" to the Clarendon Hotel + Suites for the generous hospitality we received during our fall council meeting in Phoenix. The owner of the Clarendon is a past Council member and long time supporter of Affirmation. We had a very productive Council meeting in the comfortable and stylish boutique hotel. Besides the excellent service from the staff, the conference room, and gourmet restaurant, the pool and hot tub were perfect for relaxing between Council sessions. We hope to be back there again soon. If you're planning to be in Phoenix, keep the Clarendon in mind! You can get more information about the hotel at 602-274-4774 or at [www.theclarendon.net](http://www.theclarendon.net).



## Affirmation Worship In Phoenix

By Kathryn Mitchem

One of Affirmation's best traditions is worshipping with Reconciling Congregations near the site of Council meetings. We recently had another of those great experiences during our fall meeting in Phoenix. On Sunday October 9th, Asbury United Methodist Church members and staff provided transportation for the Council, and warmly welcomed us to their Church for a great morning.

Following joyous worship, the large adult church school class hosted a most meaningful time of dialogue. More than forty persons joined Council members in a time of story-telling and information-sharing. The group beautifully manifested Asbury's website name – "a place for all people".

"This is a church that Jesus would want all churches to be like!" said an Asbury member to open the time of dialogue. A short gratitude-filled hour later a long-time member closed the sharing saying "Becoming a Reconciling Congregation has made a difference beyond words!"

In between these two powerful statements, Council members shared information about Affirmation's work among LGBTQ people, and received the gift of sharing from Asbury members, who expressed the anticipation of more mixing and mingling – really being with each other for the long haul. One told of finding Asbury through a local website that lists all welcoming churches in the area – and ultimately discovering the joyous fact that Asbury truly welcomes LGBTQ persons into ministry and not just to warm the pews!

Others told of Asbury as the place where they've found their roots – and drive fifty miles one way for it. Another said Asbury's children's moment and children's church brought her. She's deeply grateful for a church that welcomes her as one to work with the children. Asbury's children definitely know this is a place for ALL people, and are being raised to see ALL as belonging together – all classes, races, genders, sexual orientations.

Another family told of being so stifled where they were – and finally deciding Church was so important they had to look for another place. They wanted their adopted children in a place where kids were welcome and raised barrier-free. They found Asbury, and their children found such encouragement and support that they were able to speak about their two moms at the state capital!

One member describes Asbury as a church where she doesn't go away empty every week....but is given courage and renewal for every day of the week. She grows spiritually more every year – so grateful to be where the Bible isn't used as a weapon!

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*Affirmation Prayer Web (Continued from page 5)*

and queer constituents, and to fulfill the mission God has revealed to us.

2) In light of the recent Judicial Council decisions, please pray that Affirmation will join with others to lead the United Methodist Church into a future where every one is beloved and our unique identities are celebrated and cherished.



*Remembering Phyllis Athey (Continued from page 1)*

As I was preparing to go to Houston for the Judicial Council open sessions which included the oral arguments around the Beth Stroud case, I was remembering these scenes in *Casting Out Fear*. I looked up and noticed a book on my shelf that I also had not looked at in years. Gary Comstock's *Unrepentant, Self-Affirming, Practicing: Lesbian/Bisexual/Gay People within Organized Religion* (1996). Gary had sought permission to use our network of Affirmation chapters and individual members for his surveys, so numerous Affirmation stories are in the book. I opened it and began reading the sections I had marked with the book flaps. They both were in reference to Phyllis Athey and her suicide, and how it impacts all of us.

(p. 147). In 1988 Phyllis Athey committed suicide. She was a UMC candidate for ordained ministry but had been refused ordination in 1987. A letter issued by the Chicago chapter of Affirmation and the Women's Caucus and the Methodist Federation for Social Action of the Northern Illinois Conference of the UMC read: "Our sister Phyllis is dead. It was the violence of a self-inflicted gunshot wound which technically took her life. In fact, the greater violence was the destructiveness of a church and society which rejected her personhood as 'incompatible' and unacceptable. Death came as much from excluding and fear-filled resolutions, doctrines, and persons as from a bullet

(p. 234) The courage, persistence, and greater visibility of gay people has been one part of their experience. Their rejection, defeats, and injury have been the other. None of the studies permits the appreciation or prioritization of only one part. To underscore the inseparability and interaction of both parts, I shall close with a poem about the suicide of Phyllis Athey.

**Standing Witness,  
by Patricia Broughton**

Phyllis is dead.

Shot herself to death Monday afternoon.

You remember Phyllis:

the lesbian who wanted to be ordained in the  
United Methodist Church (God knows why).

Wanted to be a minister in a church that told her quite clearly:

"No queers allowed here"

(Only they said it much nicer than that, of course.)

Still, Phyllis persisted (God knows why)

insisted she had a call to ministry,

insisted she'd be less than whole

proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ

from the vantage point of a closet.

Somehow she clung to the notion that she, too,

was made in the image of God (God knows why),

even while being battered by the church,

even while her gifts and graces were being trashed.

(Continued on page 9)



Remembering Phyllis Athey (Continued from page 8)

Well, Phyllis is dead now.  
 She's not around to bother you anymore, Church.  
 Not around to stand before you,  
     insisting you see her  
     and hear her  
     and know her.

No, Phyllis isn't around any more.  
 All you have left to contend with, Church,  
     is a host of witnesses--  
     angelic and otherwise--  
     who stand expectantly before you.

And not a closet in sight.

The final editing of *Casting Out Fear* had been finished just prior to the 1988 General Conference. Mark Bowman, then Co-coordinator of our Reconciling Congregation Program (the precursor of the Reconciling Ministries Network) with Beth Richardson, showed the video day after day to several audiences a day, and led a discussion following it. In 1986, the Northern Illinois Conference took the idea of Reconciling Congregations one step further, claiming the name of Reconciling Conference, setting a precedent for others to follow suit.

In 1988, following General Conference, I had shown the video many times for delegates of our Wyoming Annual Conference (parts of New York and Pennsylvania) in support of a resolution for us to become a Reconciling Conference. I told Phyllis' story and how my initial response to the news of her suicide was an overwhelming sadness at the loss. But the sadness turned quickly to anger. In my anger I realized suddenly for the first time that homophobia kills. I fully believe that it was the story of Phyllis that allowed the body to vote overwhelmingly in support of the resolution, and thus we became a Reconciling Conference. Phyllis' legacy lived on, though she was gone from our physical world.

Phyllis made a gesture of power. That's how I try to remember her, not that she died by a shotgun wound. What I believe happened is that Phyllis lost sight of her acceptance by God and was focused instead on her rejection by the institutionalized church. We usually are what the church has made us. But to respond in faith to injustice is to take the risk of being not *what the church has made us*, but *who God has made us*.

Phyllis is truly one of our saints who took that kind of risk; and she ended up losing her life. May we never forget nor forsake her personal sacrifice, nor the sacrifices of our other saints who have gone before us. And may God forgive the Church's role perpetrating spiritual violence which led to Phyllis' death, and many others. I wish we would say to each other more often, as John Wesley said, "If your heart is as my heart, then give me your hand."

Note: This article was edited to fit space requirements. Please see [www.umaffirm.org](http://www.umaffirm.org) for the entire article.

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To receive current news, browse our web page at: [www.umaffirm.org](http://www.umaffirm.org) or sign up for one of our lists, such as CalledOut. The Called Out link is at the top of our web page under news and search. The direct link is <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/UMCalledOut>.



*She Graduated!!! (Continued from page 3)*

none of them related to her own situation.

The last e-mails I received from her were in mid-August. They were about pending breast cancer legislation and a gas boycott to protest high prices. Then came the e-mail last month that she had undergone open heart surgery and had "graduated". I'll miss her. I'll miss her spirit, her joy. I'll miss her hugs. But she's graduated!!! Welcome her into your loving arms, Jesus, and give her the rest she richly deserves. Maybe you can get her to rest. We didn't have much luck with that down here.

Note: My friend's name was omitted from this article out of respect to her family.

## A Day to Remember

By Diane DeLap

Each year since 1999 the Transgender community has paused on or about November 20<sup>th</sup> to remember those who died simply because they lived gender-variant lives. Inspired by a November 1998 candlelight vigil in memory of Rita Hester held in Brighton, MA, the Transgender Day of Remembrance has been held each year since. Rita Hester was brutally murdered in her Brighton apartment on November 28, 1988. Like most transgender slayings, it was particularly brutal, and its investigation by police was cursory. Sensational media coverage repeatedly referred to Rita as male, despite the fact that she had been living and working as a female for over ten years. Also, unfortunately like most transgender murders, her killers remain unpunished.

Since the 1999 Day of Remembrance in San Francisco, a web site "Remembering Our Dead" ([www.gender.org/remember/day/index.html](http://www.gender.org/remember/day/index.html)) led by Gwen Smith, has served as a focal point for individuals and groups wishing to participate in services in their communities. The web site maintains a partial list of those transgender individuals who have had their lives taken from them in the previous year and a cumulative list of those known since 1970. This year's list includes nineteen names, of which ten were from the United States. The list of names since 1970 includes over 340 names. The web site also lists over 225 locations worldwide that plan memorial activities for 2005.

It's important that we all show solidarity with the Transgender community to force authorities to vigorously pursue and prosecute those who commit brutal crimes against transgender persons. This year has seen the second attempt at trying the three killers of Gwen Araujo who beat and strangled her in October 2003. The first trial ended in a hung jury last year after the defendants claimed a "transgender panic" at discovering that a girl they had sex with actually had male genitalia drove them to the killing. The second trial ended with conviction for two of the three defendants. Only when the community at large demands fair treatment will police, prosecutors, and juries take seriously the murder of transgender victims.

This issue of the Affirmation newsletter will be mailed following this year's ceremonies, but put November 20, 2006 on your calendar, and find a place where you can add your voice to those demanding justice.



## Creative Ways to Get Involved

### Give a Scholarship to our 2006 Retreat in St Louis

By Jim Palmquist - Fund Development Chairman

It takes resources to propel our movement forward through Affirmation's work. We have the ideas, the energy, the knowledge and the insight. But we always need the economic resources to underwrite our work. There are good projects we don't do because of the lack of resources. We run on a shoestring budget. We squeeze each dollar for maximum impact and results.

And we work with our contributors to give them what they want for their financial support. Past underwriters have sponsored our 10-day newsletter at General Conference and got some advertising benefits, for example.

What would you like to have in thanks for your gift to Affirmation? Tell us.

We have some opportunities to support Affirmation that may feel better than just sending a check. For example:

- Sponsor a part of a newsletter – get your name, business, or organization in the newsletter as sponsor if you wish – \$2,000
- Underwrite an Affirmation retreat leader – \$500 [We are having annual retreats and may accelerate the schedule. Support us here and also sign up for the retreat in the next newsletter.]
- 'Adopt a Council member' – provide travel, room and board for a member to a National Council meeting – \$500 [You won't have to send birthday or Christmas gifts.]
- Give a scholarship to our 2006 Retreat in St. Louis – \$395 [We need four scholarships. You can buy part of a scholarship too. These scholarships have been a true blessing to their recipients, and some of our Council members came to know us first through the retreats.]
- Sponsor an Affirmation member attending a conference or event (or part of a conference or event) – \$250 [We will ask our Lynx Committee what events they want sponsors to support.]
- Give frequent flyer miles – Any airline and any amount. [Running a national organization requires travel spending, and this gift could help us a lot.]

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## Judicial Council Decisions and Responses - Pertinent Web Links

**Judicial Council Decisions:** [http://archives.umc.org/interior\\_judicial.asp?mid=263](http://archives.umc.org/interior_judicial.asp?mid=263)

\*\*Note the dissenting opinions for JCD #1032

**A Pastoral Letter to the People of The United Methodist Church from the Council of Bishops** (November 2, 2005): <http://archives.umc.org/interior.asp?ptid=1&mid=10171>

**"In Their Own Words":** Links to the bishops' individual or conference websites. Many have their personal statements re: Judicial Council Decision 1032.

<http://archives.umc.org/interior.asp?ptid=21&mid=5864>

**Communication Commission Affirms 'Open hearts, Open minds, Open doors':**

(A Statement from the General Commission on Communication of The United Methodist Church, November 10, 2005) <http://www.umcom.org>



## **JOIN AFFIRMATION FOR A WEEKEND OF RETREAT and RENEWAL**

**LABOR DAY WEEKEND  
SEPTEMBER 1-4, 2006**

**COME AND ENJOY A TIME AWAY FOR SPIRITUAL RENEWAL AND  
SPIRITUAL GROWTH THROUGH EXPERIENCES OF GOD AND  
COMMUNITY AROUND THE THEME OF  
EMBODIED QUEER THEOLOGY**

***Our retreat guides will be  
Rev. Joretta Marshall and Rev. David Meredith***

*Site: La Salle Retreat Center  
In the foothills of the Ozarks  
A thirty-minute drive  
From the St. Louis, MO airport*

**Watch website [www.umaffirm.org](http://www.umaffirm.org) and upcoming newsletters  
for registration and other details**



**Affirmation: United Methodists for  
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Concerns  
PO Box 1021; Evanston, IL 60204  
[www.umaffirm.org](http://www.umaffirm.org)  
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/UMCalledOut>**